to the days when the Rulers of Bahrain lived here and ruled the Islands from the castle. Below the fortresss is the spring of Hanani, whose water is the best in Bahrain, and a plain where, in the rainy season, a small lake forms and on disappearing leaves in its place a bright lawn of grass. Rifaa has been expanding rapidly during recent years, the town is spreading to the south-east, and it now possesses boys' and girls' schools and a Municipality. Some members of the Ruling Family still live in the town which has expanded owing to the development of the oil industry, in which some 500 of its male inhabitants are working.

The situation of the town is ideal for strategical purposes, from it it is possible to see Manama, Muharraq and Sitra while the land around it is free of vegetation which could have served to hide the enemy. It has an excellent climate and is drier than Manama in the summer. To the north of the town are two small graves where members of the Khalifah family are buried; these fell in battle during a civil war which took place in the 19th century.

There is a tradition connected with the fortress of Rifaa. It is said to have been built in the 17th century by the Wazir of the then Ruler, a certain Shaikh Jabbara. For years the Ruler and his wazir worked together, but one day the Shaikh was told about the beauty of the wazir's wife, and he desired her. He was tricked into believing that he had visited her, though in fact he was entertained by her maid-servant. He was so angry at the deception, about which the wazir knew nothing, that he killed him. The Wazir's widow thereupon fled from Rifaa to the mainland, from where she wrote to the Shah of Persia sending him a minature palm tree of pearls and gold and saying that so rich was Bahrain that such a tree was given to a child as a toy. She succeeded in exciting the avarice of the Persian Shah, who sent an army to Bahrain, defeated and killed Shaikh Jabbara, and annexed the Islands to Persia, thus avenging the Wazir's wife. This same Shaikh Jabbara is said to have lived in the fort of Amr, south-east of the Jebel, which is mentioned in Chapter VIII.

There is a third Rifaa, a small community built by BAPCO for its Indian and Pakstani employees; this is mentioned in the Chapter on Bahrain's Oil.

AWALI

Meaning "The High Places," this name was given by Shaikh Hamed, the late Ruler of Bahrain, to the oil camp when it was first established in its present location. Before the oil company arrived in Bahrain the site was deserted—for who would live in the middle of a waterless desert ? But the company wanted to build their town near the oil field, and so the small, 240 foot, hill was chosen. Today Awali somewhat resembles a London surburb or a small American town. As in London, varied gardens and different coloured exteriors of the houses serve to disguise their basic similarity. In these gardens children play while their mothers chat to each other over the fences. Happy

312 many of the travellers who have visited the islands. Men with deflated sheepskins dive down to the spring and place the mouth of the skin over the place where the fresh water emerges ; the skin then fills with fresh water and when full the diver comes to the surface. Before artesian wells were drilled in Bahrain both Muharraq and Manama obtained much of their water in this way, but today, owing to artesian piped wells and water systems, the undersea springs are little used except those to the north of Bahrain near the pearling banks. A Turkish traveller who visited Bahrain in 1554, Sidi Ali, says of the submarine springs, "The sailors provided with a leather sack, dive down into the sea and bring the fresh water from the bottom for Rais Murad's (the Governor of Bahrain) use. This water is particularly pleasant and cold in spring time. God's Power is boundless !" There is a 173 legend concerning the spring of Abu Mahur which says that in the time of the Caliph Merwan (684-685) a certain Ibn Hakim, a chief in Qatif, wished to marry the lovely daughter of a Bahrain shaikh. His suit was refused and so he attacked the islands and captured all the wells which supplied the towns on Bahrain Island, but the guardian diety of the Bahrainis caused the well Abu Mahur to appear in the sea near Muharraq to succour his people.

NABIH SALIH

101 A most attractive island is Nabih Salih, set in the Khor-al-Kab between Umm al-Hassan and the mainland of Bahrain. With its 529 thick cultivation, for the date palms run right down to the sea shore, and its many springs, including a large pool much frequented by [788] bathers, Nabih Salih is a very popular place for visitors. In addition to its pool it is a place of pilgrimage for the Shia of Bahrain who go to pay their respects to the tomb of Salih after whom the island is named. The date palms of the island are particularly fine, they compare very favourably with those elsewhere in Bahrain, which is mainly due to the pool already mentioned, Safahiya, which irrigates much of the island. [505] Nabih Salih can be visited by launch or sailing boat, the nearest point to it on Bahrain is Ain al-Hakim ; boats can also be obtained from Umm al-Hasan or from Sitra. People have been known to swim to the island, but this is not the only way of getting there and in the summer this method is inclined to be rather exhausting.

SITRA

[101] South of Nabih Salih and close to the coast of Bahrain is Sitra 361 Island, which in addition to its many villages and gardens contains the Tank Farm and Drum Plant of BAPCO and the land end of the jetty. The site of these installations is a strip of bare and often sea-swept sands, but to the north of the island there are many gardens and a sizeable pool, Ain Raha, which is much visited by the people of Muharraq and Manama. Among the villages of North Sitra are Wadiyan, Sufala, Kharijya and Kuriya. Near the third village is a school and police station. To the south of the island is Umm al-Baidh, literally "Mother

and wounded, and finally at the end of the day the Portuguese won a complete victory, and their occupation of Bahrain dates from this time. 175

Rais Zarafa obtained information that the body of King Mocrin, who died a few days after he was wounded, was being taken to Hassa for burial. He intercepted the ship and seized the King's body. The head of Mocrin was cut off and carried back to Hormuz, a bilingual inscription was set up in the city commemorating the bold exploit of Antonio Correa, and the King of Portugal granted him permission to add a King's head to his coat of arms and to assume the title of "Baharem" after his name. The only description available of the taking of Bahrain is from Portuguese sources, and it is likely that the numerical strength of the forces is not accurately described, but in any case the defenders must have far outnumbered the Portuguese and their Hormuzian allies.

In 1522 the King of Hormuz organized a rebellion throughout the Gulf against the Portuguese. On a given night there were simultaneous risings in Hormuz, Bahrain, Muscat, and Sohar. At Hormuz the Portuguese garrison was besieged in the fortress, but eventually relieved by reinforcements from Muscat. In Oman the rebellion was not successful, and, seeing that it had failed, the King of Hormuz fled to Kishm, where he was afterwards murdered. He was succeeded by his son, aged 13, who made a new treaty with the Portuguese in 1523.

The rebels in Bahrain met with better success. According to an Arab history, the people of Bahrain had suffered very severely from the tyranny and oppression of the conquerors. On the appointed night, led by their chief, Shaikh Hussein bin Said, they attacked the Portuguese garrison and completely surprised them. They seized the Portuguese Governor and hung him on a date tree, and they expelled the remnants of the garrison. Shaikh Hussein then proclaimed himself the ruler of Bahrain. After some time, however, he made terms with the Portuguese and was appointed by them as a local governor with a Portuguese official, de Menzies, as his assistant and adviser. Bahrain returned again to the Portuguese rule.

There is a story told in one of the local Shia histories of Bahrain about its occupation by the Portuguese. 173

The islands were ruled, on behalf of Portugal, by a Mohammedan Governor, or Wali, who belonged to the Sunni sect, although the people of Bahrain were Shias. The Wali had a Wazir, who was also a Sunni, and he hated the Shias so bitterly that he never ceased plotting to injure and destroy them by every possible means.

2: Belgrave G-4 (no date) 1935 MZ2 Bahrain MZ2

173 One day the Wazir came to the Wali holding in his hand a pomegranate. On the pomegranate was inscribed "La illah ila Allah wa Mohammed rasool Allah" and the names of the Caliphs Abu Bakr, Omar, Othman, and Ali. The Wali examined the pomegranate carefully and saw that the writing was actually embedded in the pomegranate itself, not merely cut upon the skin; without doubt it could not have been written by any human hand.

He said to the Wazir, "This is a miracle, an evident demonstration against the belief of these apostates. Now what is your opinion about these Shia people in Bahrain?"

The Wazir replied, "Allah has shown you the right way. Verily these are a fanatical people. You should summon them all and show them this pomegranate, and if they accept this divine proof and are converted to the right belief, then Allah will reward you. If they do not accept this proof, you should order them to provide an answer to the miracle, and, if they cannot explain it, then degrade them, make them pay tribute, seize their women, kill all their men."

The Wali accepted his Wazir's advice and summoned all the chief men of the Shias, the Ulema, the nobles, and all who were intelligent and religious, and he showed them the pomegranate and told them what he had decided. They looked at the pomegranate and they were amazed, their faces changed colour, and the muscles of their shoulders shook. Then the oldest of them all stepped forward and said, "Give us three days' time, and in three days we will seek an acceptable answer. If we find no answer in this time, do with us as you wish."

The Wali granted their request, and they left him in fear and trembling and assembled in one of their houses to consider the matter. They chose ten of their most religious men, and out of the ten they chose three, and to one of the three they said, "Go this night out into the desert alone and worship Allah and implore our Imam to help us and to give us some sign which will show us an escape from this calamity."

The mullah went out into the desert and stayed all night, worshipping Allah, weeping and praying for help, but when the dawn came he had seen nothing, and he returned sadly to his people.

On the next night the second mullah went out, but he, too, returned in the morning, having seen and heard nothing, and there was wailing and lamentation among the women in all the villages of Bahrain.

On the last night the third mullah went out. He was a very pious man and his name was Mohamed bin Isa. He went bareheaded and

barefooted into the desert, and the night was very dark, for there was no moon. He wept and he prayed and he implored Allah to save the believers from destruction. A little before the dawn he saw the figure of a man which approached him and said, "Why do I see you, Mohamed, in this condition? Why are you out in the desert at night?"

The mullah replied, "Oh, man, leave me alone. I am here for an urgent purpose, to prevent a great calamity, and I cannot speak or complain about it except to my Imam."

Then said the man, "Yah Mohamed, I am the Imam. Tell me what it is that you need."

"If you are really the Imam," said the mullah, "you could read what is in my heart and you would know what I need without my telling."

The man replied, "Indeed I do know. You came out because of what was written on a pomegranate."

When the mullah heard this he was convinced and became all ears while the Imam spoke the following words:

"In the house of the Wazir there is a courtyard, and in the centre of the courtyard there grows a pomegranate tree. When the tree bore fruit in the summer the Wazir made a mould of clay the size of a pomegranate and cut it into two halves. Inside each half he wrote the writing which you saw on the pomegranate. Then he placed the halves of the mould over a young pomegranate and bound it tightly while the fruit was still immature. In this way he affected it and caused it to become as it is now.

"To-morrow, when you return, say that you have found the answer, but refuse to deliver it except in the house of the Wazir. When you go to the house, enter the courtyard and look to the right. You will see a stairway leading to an upper room. Say to the Wali that you will give your answer in that upper room. The Wazir will refuse to allow this, but you must insist. When the Wazir goes up the stairs, follow him closely and do not on any account leave him alone in the room. As you enter the room look towards the window, and on a shelf above it you will see a white bag. Take the bag, and you will find the very mould which the Wazir used for his device. Then take the pomegranate from the bag, force it into the mould, and place it before the Wali so that he can see the trick which was practised by his Wazir. Tell the Wali that you have another miracle, and ask him to order the Wazir to break the pomegranate and see what will befall."

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173 When the mullah heard this advice he was overjoyed and kissed the ground at the feet of the Imam and returned to his people to tell them the good news. On the next morning they all assembled before the Wali, and the mullah did all the things that the Imam had ordered, and everything happened as he had been told, but when the Wali commanded his Wazir to break the pomegranate, smoke and ashes burst forth from it and covered the face and beard of the Wazir.

Then the Wali turned to the mullah and asked him, "Who told you about this trick?"

The mullah answered, "Our Imam and the demonstration of Allah towards us."

Then the Wali rose up from his seat and took the mullah by the hand and called on Allah to bear witness to the trick which had been played on the Shias, and he summoned his servants and his executioner and cut off the head of the Wazir and asked pardon from the people of Bahrain.

175 In 1529 Bahrain was again in rebellion against the Portuguese. The islands were governed by a relation of the King of Hormuz. The King of Hormuz himself had been sent to Portugal, as he became too rich in Hormuz. The Portuguese demanded a higher tribute, and in order to pay this the Hormuzians tried to obtain more money from Bahrain, but the Governor refused to pay.

The Portuguese Viceroy, Nuno da Cunha, appointed Tavarez da Sousa as commander of the seas, and it was intended that he should take command of an expedition against Bahrain. Apparently he was loath to go there, and he persuaded the Viceroy to appoint in his place Simon da Cunha, the Viceroy's brother. After waiting some time for reinforcements from Portugal the fleet sailed from Hormuz. It consisted of five vessels carrying 400 men, and some native craft, but it is said that they had only one and a half casks of gunpowder.

[132] They reached Bahrain in September, the hottest, dampest, and most unhealthy month in the year. They wasted half their small supply of powder in saluting the port. The Bahrain chief hung out two flags on the tower of his fortress, one white and the other red, to show that he was prepared either for peace or for war, but the Portuguese captains were determined to fight. For three days they pounded the walls of the fort with their cannon, and then their supply of gunpowder gave out. In the meantime the Arab leader offered to surrender, on certain conditions, but the Portuguese were determined not to lose the chance of